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## Synoptic problem : an investigation of synoptic relationships

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THE SYNOPTIC PROBLEM: AN INVESTIGATION  
OF SYNOPTIC RELATIONSHIPS

By

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Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements  
for the Senior Scholars Program

COLBY COLLEGE  
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## ABSTRACT

THE SYNOPTIC PROBLEM: AN INVESTIGATION  
OF SYNOPTIC RELATIONSHIPS

George Capone III

In recent years, the Synoptic Problem has become an important focus of New Testament scholarship. The Two-Document Hypothesis, although still widely accepted as the solution, has recently been challenged by a variety of source hypotheses, most notably the Griesbach hypothesis. In effect, the Synoptic Problem has become an open question for an increasing number of scholars.

This project analyzes four significant pericopae, the Empty Tomb Tradition, the Kingdom Parables Discourse, the Synoptic Apocalypse, and the Transfiguration Narrative, in an attempt to determine priority and dependence among the synoptic Gospels. The study does not presuppose a particular source theory, although it does evaluate specific ones when applicable. The aim of the study is to conduct an analysis of a limited but representative amount of synoptic material in order to develop a working hypothesis concerning synoptic relationships.

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## INTRODUCTION

New Testament scholarship has long been concerned with the origin and interrelationships of the synoptic gospels.<sup>1</sup> This concern has come to be known as the Synoptic Problem. Specifically, the problem is a literary investigation involving the attempt to identify the manner and method of the synoptic gospels' composition. Since the time of the early church fathers, numerous hypotheses have been proposed to account for the unique patterns of agreements and differences among Matthew, Mark, and Luke. With the advent of modern biblical criticism in the eighteenth century, the Synoptic Problem became a major question of gospel research. As a consequence, scholars pursued the problem in great detail which has resulted in the widespread acceptance, in the twentieth century, of the Two-Document hypothesis.<sup>2</sup> Biblical research had apparently

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<sup>1</sup>The synoptic gospels consist of Matthew, Mark, and Luke. The term, synoptic (Greek word means "to see together") arises from the large degree of similarity among the three gospels, enabling them to be arranged in parallel columns, i.e., a synopsis or harmony.

<sup>2</sup>B.H. Streeter, The Four Gospels: A Study of Origins (London: Macmillan & Co., Ltd., 1964). Streeter provides the most formidable presentation of the hypothesis. In essence, the Two-Document hypothesis postulates Marcan priority and the subsequent use of Mark by Matthew and Luke independently. In order to account for material in Matthew and Luke not found in Mark, the hypothesis constructs a hypothetical source, Q, which is available to Matthew and Mark. The hypothesis recognizes, at the present time, that more than two documents may have been involved, e.g., M and L for material found only in Matthew and Luke, etc.

furnished a definitive solution.

In recent years, however, the validity of the Two-Document hypothesis has been seriously questioned by many scholars.<sup>3</sup> Alternate solutions have arisen, most notably the revival of the Griesbach hypothesis,<sup>4</sup> in an attempt to deal with increasing uncertainty about the "accepted solution." In effect, the Synoptic Problem has once again become an open question. This situation not only requires the biblical scholar to formulate a working hypothesis concerning the problem but, also, demands a degree of flexibility and receptiveness in the face of new evidence.

The following study represents a survey and evaluation of the current situation. Although a complete examination of the Synoptic Problem lies beyond the scope of this project, analysis of selected portions of synoptic material will provide necessary information for the formulation of a working hypothesis. The study will deal with four important pericopae of the synoptic gospels: the Empty Tomb tradition, the Kingdom Parables discourse, the Transfiguration narrative, and the Synoptic Apocalypse. The investigation is not intended to confirm a particular source hypothesis, although this may

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<sup>3</sup>The most important works are B.C. Butler, The Originality of St. Matthew (Cambridge: The University Press, 1951), W.R. Farmer, The Synoptic Problem (New York: Macmillan and Co., 1964), and R.L. Lindsay, "A Modified Two-Document Theory of the Synoptic Dependence and Interdependence," Novam Testamentum, 6 (Fasc. 4, 1963), pp.239-263.

<sup>4</sup>This hypothesis, proposed by J.J. Griesbach in 1790, postulates Matthean priority and the use of this gospel by Luke as a source. Mark, as a conflator, combined the two versions as he constructed his gospel.

very well be a result. Instead priority and dependency will first be considered without the aid of a preconceived hypothesis. Our methodology, concerning analysis of the pericopae, will involve an attempt to discern the perspective of each evangelist and an investigation of possible synoptic relationships.<sup>5</sup>

Finally, the limitations of the project must be recognized. Since the investigation deals with a small part of the synoptic material, one must assess the evidence carefully. Although conclusions pertaining to a particular synoptic section will have bearing on the whole problem, these conclusions must be drawn cautiously and within the limits of the evidence. In addition, the isolation of the pericopae from the rest of the gospel is an artificial process necessary for analysis. To minimize the effects of this process, a knowledge of the evangelists perspectives becomes essential. Possible solutions to the Synoptic Problem demand an intimacy with the gospels; creating a productive environment for source analysis.

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<sup>5</sup>This methodology concerns Linear and Lateral analysis which will be explored in the first chapter.

## CHAPTER I

## THE EMPTY TOMB NARRATIVE

The Empty Tomb tradition of the synoptic gospels points to literary relationships which suggest a common origin and dependency. The question of priority and dependency has occupied the attention of scholars in what has come to be termed the Synoptic problem. Although numerous hypotheses have proposed a solution, with Marcan priority as a basis, Matthean priority, as a solution, has received increased scholarly attention in recent years.<sup>1</sup> The tradition of the Empty Tomb, as a common synoptic pericope and pivotal Christian proclamation, furnishes a specific case in which to determine the viability of a source hypothesis.

Prior to an analysis of the tradition, a discussion of certain methodological presuppositions are required. First, a utilization of linear readings enables one "to discover logical links, narrative flow, and the connections which give material its present form and order."<sup>2</sup> Familiarity

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<sup>1</sup>The most notable attempts in this area, although the following authors do not write extensively on the Empty Tomb tradition, are B.C. Butler, The Originality of St. Matthew (Cambridge: The University Press, 1951) and W.R. Farmer, The Synoptic Problem (New York: MacMillan Co., 1964).

<sup>2</sup>O.L. Cope, Matthew, Scribe Trained for the Kingdom of Heaven (Washington: The Catholic Biblical Association of America, 1976), p.7.

with the complexities of the synoptic tradition presupposes an understanding of the tradition within each gospel. The evangelists recorded a tradition because it not only made sense with their available sources but also because it was consistent with their theological perspective. Literary analysis would be an exercise in futility if one presupposed that the evangelists produced nonsense.

As a corollary, a tradition receives its primary importance from its context within a specific gospel. The context relates the tradition to the overall structure and perspective of the particular gospel perspective. A specific tradition may yield a high degree of similarity within synoptic parameters but a use of linear readings and a contextual understanding highlights individual emphases and nuances which may be overlooked in attempts to isolate literary similarities.

Second, with linear readings as a basis, lateral readings seek to discern interdependencies across the synoptic record. Linear readings deal with the individual gospel account while lateral readings deal with the total synoptic account of a particular pericope. One's use of lateral readings presupposes that similarities and differences, inherent in the evangelists account of the same tradition, arise out of consistencies and variations within sources available to the authors and from redactional techniques which shape the tradition in terms of the total perspective of the individual gospel. Lateral readings also presume,



with regard to the authors sources, that one attempts to determine priority and dependence within the synoptic record prior to establishing a theory of hypothetical sources such as Q,L, or M. Source hypothesis formed within synoptic parameters have a greater chance of internal substantiation than those hypotheses dependent upon external factors.

Finally, although individual pericopae, such as the Empty Tomb, do not provide adequate evidence for determining priority and dependence concerning the whole gospel record, they do provide specific instances in which to test a particular source hypothesis. With these factors in mind, a discussion of the Empty Tomb may proceed.

The Matthean pericope emphasizes the miraculous aspect of the women's visit to the tomb. "On the first day of the week, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary" experience an earthquake followed by the descent of an angel who rolls back the stone and sits upon it. The women's knowledge of the sealed tomb at the burial (27:60) and the same condition at their visit (implied by 28:2) necessitates divine intervention in order to overcome the barrier which prevents discovery of the empty tomb. Matthew supports the presence of the angel by noting the fearful reactions of the guards, who were posted at the tomb by Pilate (27:65), in response to the angelic command, to go tell the disciples of the resurrection and Jesus' presence in the Galilee, with fear and

joy in apparent awe of the miraculous. "The intention of all this is not simply to impress the reader with miraculous detail, but to demonstrate that God was at work throughout the whole of the earthly life of Jesus and that his (God's) action had culminated in the greatest of all miracles, the Resurrection."<sup>3</sup>

The appearance of Jesus to the women on their return from the tomb (28:9-10) enables Matthew to not only confirm the angelic message but also quiet the women's fears.<sup>4</sup> Longstaff suggests that verses 9-10 are a later insertion into the Matthean text and that the continuity between Empty Tomb and the Bribing of the Soldiers is much more fluid without them.<sup>5</sup> Jesus' appearance in the Galilee, which fulfills His earlier prediction (26:32) and the angel's message (28:7), concludes the gospel.

The Marcan pericope differs from the Matthean account in a number of ways (see next paragraph). The importance of these differences stems from Mark's perspective which stresses "the essentials of Christian orthodoxy: the crucifixion, the resurrection and the expectation of the parousia."<sup>6</sup> The Marcan tradition of the Empty Tomb remains

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<sup>3</sup>H.C. Kee et al, Understanding the New Testament, 3rd ed. (Englewood-Cliffs: Prentice-Hall Inc., 1957), p.320.

<sup>4</sup>"Empty Tomb and Absent Lord: Mark's Interpretation of the Tradition." Society of Biblical Literature: 1976 Seminar Papers. Cambridge, Massachusetts: The Society of Biblical Literature, 1976.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid p.275. -

<sup>6</sup>Ibid p.276.

consistent with the overall gospel perspective.

He has several times over had Jesus instruct the reader what the final outcome will be: the triumphant appearance of Jesus as Son of Man-King, the vindication of the faithful, and the establishment of God's rule. There are no external guarantees that this will occur; the evidence carries weight only for men of faith. As he has done throughout the gospel, Mark does not coerce faith from his readers; he invites it as a response. In this mood of invitation and eschatological expectancy, he brings to a close his 'good news.'

Mark's version of the tradition lacks any significant amount of miraculous elaboration. The open tomb was an established fact by the time the women arrived which avoided the necessity of describing a divine act to move the stone. (cf. Mt. 28:2-4) Upon entering the tomb, they encounter a young man sitting on the right side, a contrast with Matthew's angel. (Mark and Luke contain the implication that the messenger/s is an angel although they are not explicit) The young man's pronouncement of Jesus' resurrection and the empty tomb does not elicit joyful and numinous awe, as in Matthew, but rather fear and astonishment which prevents the women from relating their experience to the disciples. Mark's account, oriented to the parousia, refrains from mentioning resurrection appearances which are essential in the Matthean and Lucan versions.

Luke's Empty Tomb tradition not only varies from Matthew but also from Mark. Mary Magdalene, Joanna, Mary the mother of James, and some other women were unable to complete all the requirements for burial due to the onset

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<sup>7</sup>H.C. Kee et al, p.275.

of the Sabbath. Because of the incomplete burial, the women returned and prepared spices and ointments for the body. This set of circumstances enabled Luke to record that the women had a definite purpose in visiting the tomb on the first day of the week. Since Luke does not mention the sealing of the tomb, he concerns himself with the discovery of the empty tomb not the stone seal which prevents inspection of the tomb.<sup>8</sup> This presents a problem in Luke's narrative: why does he mention in verse 24:2 that the women found the stone removed from the entrance when he does not record the sealing of the tomb at the burial? A possible explanation may be traced to Luke's intent to keep the tomb accessible to the women upon their return from observance of the Sabbath but in recording the Empty Tomb tradition he fails to account for the presence of the stone in the burial tradition. The women do not converse about the open tomb, as in Mark, but feel confused about the missing body. The appearance of the two young men assuage the confusion of the women by referring to Jesus' predictions of the crucifixion and the resurrection (9:22&24). In response to the message of the two men, the women remember the predictions and return to tell the apostles and the disciples. (A vivid contrast with Mark) The statements of the messengers, specifically 24:6-7, refer to Jesus' post-resurrection appearances.

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<sup>8</sup>Longstaff, p.275. -

Since Luke locates all resurrection appearances of Christ in or about Jerusalem, these verses replace (I would substitute "contrast with") Mark 14:28: 'But after I am raised up, I will go before you to Galilee.' The reference is to prophecies recorded in 9:22&44, and Luke now implies that the women were numbered among the disciples to whom they were addressed.<sup>9</sup>

Luke concluded his gospel with Jesus' appearances in and around Jerusalem and His ascension.

This attempt at a linear understanding of the Empty Tomb tradition presents the tradition in terms of its gospel context while at the same time pointing to variations within the synoptic record. In order to clarify these variations we must turn to a lateral reading of the gospels. A lateral analysis leads to the following schema. (see appendix) The ensuing comments pertain to the important relationships suggested by this schema.

1. Although Mark records a complete burial, his later suggestion of an incomplete burial (16:1) and Luke's explicit account of an incomplete burial (23:55-56) provides the motive which necessitates a visit to the tomb by the women. The Matthean account (27:59-60) appears to record a complete burial which causes possible ambiguity in relation to the nature of the women's visit unless they were going to check for signs of life in case of accidental interment.<sup>10</sup>
2. Matthew 27:60&66 and Mark 16:4 secures the tradition that the tomb was tightly sealed, Luke makes no reference to

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<sup>9</sup>Nolan B. Harmon, ed., The Interpreter's Bible, Vol. 8: The Gospel According to St. Luke, by S.M. Gilmour (New York: Abingdon-Cokesbury Press, 1952), p.418.

<sup>10</sup>Longstaff, p.274.

the matter.

3. Mark 16:4 and Luke 24:2 places the removal of the stone prior to the presence of the women. Was the displaced stone necessary for the resurrection to take place in these two accounts? Mark and Luke are ambiguous on the matter while Matthew's account suggests a negative answer. For Matthew the resurrection has already occurred and he sees the stone as an obstacle to the discovery of the empty tomb, not the resurrection, and incorporates divine force to remove this obstacle.

4. The divine agent's message agrees closely in Matthew 28:5-7 and Mark 16:6-7-although Matthew explicitly identifies the agent as an angel whereas Mark simply records a young man. Total number of words in the passage are 55 in Matthew and 43 in Mark. Common words number 22 (four words show significant but incomplete agreement) meaning 47.3% of Matthew's passage and 60.5% of Mark's passage are common to one another. The words unique to Matthew comprise 36.4% and those unique to Mark comprise 23.3%. These figures are a strong indication of dependency.

5. The reference of the young man/men in Mark 16:7 and Luke 24:6 to the earlier predictions of Jesus creates a bond between the resurrection and the earthly ministry of Jesus. In Matthew, "he is going before you to Galilee" (28:7), refers to Jesus' prediction in 26:32. To remain consistent, Matthew does not agree with Mark and Luke in saying "he told you" (regarding Jesus' resurrection appearances in Galilee)

because 26:32 is addressed to the apostles. Therefore Matthew puts the message with the angel which compensates for the women's ignorance of the prediction in 26:32.

6. Mark's mention of Peter places an emphasis on the Apostle which would seem more appropriate in Matthew. In Matthew, "there is no mention of Peter--surprising, in view of the prominence which that disciple has in that gospel."<sup>11</sup> Crossan states, "Mark's emphasis on Peter serves his present interest, namely that he has been especially designated to receive this message."<sup>12</sup>

7. The women's obedience in Matthew and Luke paves the way for the resurrection appearances. Mark's account, which states the women disobeyed, indicates a knowledge of the resurrection (16:6) but retains the emphasis on the end of the age as opposed to post-Easter appearances of Jesus.

These relationships, by noting the major similarities and variations of the tradition, not only support unique characteristics of the individual accounts but also acknowledge a strong and common bond between them. This bond suggests that the Empty Tomb reports stem from a common source, perhaps with one of the specific gospel pericope serving as the basis for the other two. This conclusion coincides with one of our premises; priority and dependency

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<sup>11</sup>Nolan B. Harmon, ed., The Interpreter's Bible, Vol. 2: The Gospel According to St. Matthew, by S.E. Johnson (New York: Abingdon-Cokesbury Press, 1951), p.358.

<sup>12</sup>J.D. Crossan, "Empty Tomb and Absent Lord," The Passion Narrative in Mark, ed. Werner H. Kelber (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1976), p.149.

should be sought within the synoptic record prior to the construction of external sources. In the quest of establishing priority, an analysis of the tradition must attempt to discern and explain the dependent relationships of the significant sections of the pericope.

Our discussion will consider four sections as significant. The first sections concerns the burial of Jesus (Mt.27:59-61/Mk.15:46/Lk.23:53-56) and the reasons the women visit the tomb on the first day of the week (Mt.28:1/Mk.16:1/Lk.24:1). Matthew records a complete burial and the reason the women visit the tomb is consistent with this fact although it is, perhaps, a little ambiguous to the modern reader. (Matthew's readers probably considered his reason as sufficient because the gospel reflects a Jewish-Christian milieu and an intimacy with Jewish practices) In contrast, Luke records an incomplete burial based on the presence of the women and their preparation of spices. Luke's reason for the women's visit, to anoint the body, is consistent with the burial circumstances. Mark's account of this activity presents a problem. Mark records a complete burial similar to Matthew but provides the same reason as Luke for the women's visit. This is a situation of an obvious inconsistency between the burial and the reason for the visit.

This section appears to point to Matthean priority. Matthew's account is consistent on an internal level; the narrative flows in a logical manner. The same can also be said of Luke's account. Luke's incomplete burial, however,



is not substantiated by Matthew, Mark, nor even John. It seems unlikely that Matthew would alter Luke's incomplete burial and not include Luke's reason for the visit. Luke, on the other hand, may have had a strong enough motive to change Matthew's complete burial to an incomplete one. As a gentile, unfamiliar with Jewish practices, Luke may not have understood the women's visit to the tomb, especially in light of a proper burial. In an attempt to make the tradition consistent, to his own frame of reference, Luke changes Matthew's burial and provides a logical reason why the women visit the tomb. Mark, as a conflator, records Matthew's burial and Luke's reason for the women's visit. In the process he fails to notice the inconsistency which arises by combining the two versions.

The second significant section concerns the Matthean account of the miraculous activity which surrounds the removal of the stone (Mt.28:2-4). As mentioned before, the stone is not a barrier to the resurrection in Matthew's version but only a barrier to the discovery of the empty tomb. This tradition is absent from Mark and Luke. They merely record that the women arrive at the tomb and the stone is already removed. Although there is miraculous activity surrounding the removal of the stone, the implication cannot be immediately drawn that this account is an insertion into the text or a characteristic of a secondary source. This particular section of the tradition is an internally consistent portion of the Matthean account. It is a logical

transition between the reason why the women visit the tomb and the message of the angel. The absence of this tradition from Mark and Luke not only creates ambiguity, with regard to when the stone was removed, but also raises the question, was the stone's removal necessary for the resurrection? (see relationship 3) The internal consistency of the tradition within Matthew must be considered in a discussion of priority.

Proponents of Marcan priority may claim that the miraculous activity and the addition of the guards by Matthew is a result of the interaction between Jewish and Jewish-Christian polemic. Mark's account, as the earliest form of the tradition, elicits a response from the Jewish community in opposition to this Jewish-Christian proclamation. Matthew's pericope is clearly secondary since the gospel embodies the Christian response to Jewish polemic.<sup>13</sup> Luke's version, from this perspective, is in accord with Mark creating the situation of an agreement of Mark and Luke against Matthew.

An orientation incorporating Matthean priority, however, is also able to provide a viable explanation. The internal consistency of the account, its clarity in terms of the resurrection, and the miraculous activity coupled

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<sup>13</sup>A critical question concerning this conclusion revolves around the time element necessary for the proclamation and polemical response to take form. I would tend to say that this state of affairs could evolve within the limits of a conversation between a Jew and a Jewish-Christian. A conclusion that states that Matthew's account is secondary because of its polemical nature requires a great deal of substantiation.

with Matthew's Jewish-Christian perspective portrays a coherent interpretation of the tradition. This interpretation provides the first indications of Jesus' resurrection in the same terms as the first indications of Jesus' birth, baptism, and ministry; namely in terms of the miraculous. Matthew utilizes the miraculous in emphasizing Jesus' resurrection in the same manner as he emphasizes the other important beginning events of Jesus' life. In this context, the resurrection is the beginning of Jesus' post-Easter career which is still a most important part of His mission from the Matthean perspective. Luke, a gentile not a Jewish-Christian, is perhaps hesitant about assimilating this perspective in his version of the Empty Tomb and, as a result, lets the women happen on the open tomb. Luke changes Matthew's angel to two young men. Although this limits the divine impact of their presence at the empty tomb, Luke compensates by providing Two messengers which serves as a double confirmation of the resurrection.<sup>14</sup> Mark, as a gentile and conflator, agrees with Luke's accounts and refrains from mentioning the Matthean tradition. Mark tries to alleviate the abruptness of the discovery of the empty tomb in Luke by inserting the question of the women, "who will roll away the stone for us from the door of the tomb?", Thereby reinforcing the fact of the closed tomb which is absent in Luke. This

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<sup>14</sup> Although Luke does not explicitly call the two young men angels at this point, he does refer to them as angels in 24:23. This may be an indication that Luke remembered Matthew's angel in referring to the women's visions.

evidence appears to lend a little more credence to the solution of Matthean priority as opposed to Marcan priority.

The third significant section concerns the message given the women (Mt.28:5-7/Mk.16:6-7/Lk.24:6-7). There is a high degree of similarity between Matthew and Mark in the content of the message. (see relationship 4) The central impact of the message, in these two versions, is not only the resurrection but Jesus' expected appearance in the Galilee. Luke does not mention that Jesus will meet them in the Galilee because he places post-resurrection appearances in and around Jerusalem. This is consistent with Luke's viewpoint that Jerusalem is the fountain-head of Christianity.

In establishing priority, one must, again, consider the total internal consistency of the individual accounts. In Matthew, the angel's message fits the overall flow and structure of the narrative. If Matthew were using Mark as his source, it would be an inconsistency on the part of Matthew to delete Mark's reference to Peter, especially when the Apostle has such fame in the gospel. (see footnote 11) Along the same lines, Mark refers to Jesus as coming from Nazareth, a town in Galilee. Matthew would be amiss in not concurring with this reference to Jesus' home town since it supports Jesus' Galilean origin and looks toward His Galilean appearances. If we assume Matthean priority, less problems arise. Luke cannot incorporate the angelic message from the Matthean perspective because it does not coincide with his perspective which looks toward Jerusalem as the site of

the post-resurrection appearances of Jesus. Luke retains the essentials of the message, crucifixion and resurrection, but recasts it from his own point of view. Mark notices the dissimilarity of the messages and chooses to follow Matthew. He utilizes Luke's suggestion that Jesus' earlier words are to be recalled (in order to connect Jesus' earthly ministry and resurrection) and retains Luke's later reference to Peter. Mark appears to combine important points from both versions.

The final section, the women's response to the message (Mt.28:8/Mk.16:8/Lk.24:8-9), marks the only case of agreement within this pericope of Luke and Matthew against Mark and here the agreement is only partial. All three evangelists are familiar with the resurrection but only Matthew and Luke relate post-resurrection appearances. These appearances confirm the resurrection and enable Jesus to give the Great Commission (Mt.) or to open the disciples minds to scripture (Lk.). Mark is only concerned with the resurrection as this is the essential point of Christian proclamation and basic to the parousia.

In determining priority in this section, it is difficult to perceive Mark's dependency on Matthew or Luke, or the dependency of Luke and Matthew on Mark, due to the different emphases of the evangelists. A reliable perception, in terms of source, however, may be discerned. It is important to note that the response of the women derives from the message and receives its primary importance from the

message. Matthew's message looks toward the Galilee and the women's response leads the reader to believe that the women have grasped this orientation as evidenced by their joy. Luke changes the importance of the Galilee and the women's response is directed toward the resurrection as is shown by their recollection of Jesus' earlier predictions. Mark's message is also oriented to the Galilee but the women's response is not congruent with the Matthean response. Within the Matthean context, the women respond appropriately, with fear and joy, because they have heard the message and expect to see Jesus in the Galilee. In Mark the women do not respond to the content of the message but to the mode of deliverance of the message (the message is transmitted through the young man, the divine agent). The women do not flee because they have heard and understood the message but, rather, because they are astounded to find a young man in Jesus' tomb when they expected to find the body. This response enables Mark to use the Matthean message while at the same time inserting his own response in light of the coming *parousia*.

From an analysis of these four significant sections of the Empty Tomb tradition, it appears that the scale registers in favor of Matthean priority. Matthew's version with its characteristic internal consistency and structure seems to have been altered in the Marcan and Lucan accounts in order to fit their theological perspective.

## CHAPTER II

THE KINGDOM PARABLES DISCOURSE  
OF THE SYNOPTIC GOSPELS

The Kingdom parables discourse of the synoptic gospels provide a valuable arena in which to test various source hypotheses concerning synoptic priority and dependence. The various contexts of these parables throughout the gospels, however, complicates the task of obtaining accurate linear readings and the subsequent lateral relationships dependent upon the linear analysis. In an attempt to surmount this obstacle, the evangelist's treatment of the Kingdom parables will be considered within the following parameters; Matthew 13:1-52, Mark 4:1-34, and Luke 8:1-21. Relevant material outside of these boundaries will be discussed only in terms of its relationship to the form, structure, and content of the established parameters.

Since linear readings of the synoptic accounts are a prerequisite for discerning lateral relationships, this mode of analysis will serve as our point of departure. A linear reading of Matthew 13:1-52 reveals a consistent conceptual flow complimented by a well developed structure. Matthew's skillful use of context and structure enables the reader to detect the evangelist's interpretation of the Kingdom parables and the logical flow between this

interpretation and its application to the specific parables.

Matthew's discourse begins by establishing the setting and the audience to whom the parables are addressed. This enables Matthew to control which specific segment of the audience will hear the words of Jesus. In other words, the parables are open to the entire crowd but their interpretation is restricted to the disciples. Matthew 13:1-2 establishes the situation: Jesus is sitting in a boat a short distance from shore addressing the great crowds which had gathered about him. Verse 3a, "And he told them many things in parables,..." enables Matthew not only to relate how Jesus spoke to the crowds but also to prepare the reader for the other parables in the discourse.

Following this development of the setting and audience, Matthew relates the parable of the Sower. The parable divulges the fate of seed as it is sown in a variety of soils. The phrase, "He who has ears let him hear," a free floating saying which appears at several places in the Gospels, is used by Matthew at the conclusion of the parable although the phrase itself is not part of the parable. The Sower parable is not directly followed by its interpretation, which would appear to be an appropriate circumstance, but rather by a section in which Matthew develops a theory of parables.

The occasion for the presentation of this theory is provided by the disciple's question, "Why do you speak to them (the crowd) in parables?" Jesus' answer is not an



immediate response to the question. Instead, in 15:11-12, Matthew uses the disciple's question as a means to develop his theory of parables in an authoritative manner. A sense of authority arises from the placement of the theory among the words of Jesus. Any first century Christian would realize that such words are to be considered divine revelation.<sup>1</sup> From the Matthean perspective, the parables contain the secrets (note the plural form) of the Kingdom of heaven. According to this account, "...the plan and will of God are given in publicly available teachings but they only can be perceived by a special few. To others the secrets remain hidden."<sup>2</sup> Matthew states that the knowledge of the Kingdom is dependent upon the parables and the correct understanding of them. Furthermore, the disciples are the sole recipients of this knowledge.

Once Matthew had presented this theory of parables, he returns to the disciple's question, why address the crowds in parable? He presents Jesus' answer in verses 13:13-17 which is divided into three sub-sections; verses 13, verses 14-15 (Isaiah quotation 6:9-10), and verses 16-17. The first sub-section gives Jesus' basic answer, the crowds are blind and deaf to Jesus' message. (Note the essential words, see, hear and understand, which alludes to Isaiah

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<sup>1</sup>This does not imply that this theory of parables is a unique creation of Matthew; the theory may very well come from Jesus. The point is that Matthew utilizes this bit of tradition because it adheres to his understanding of the parables.

<sup>2</sup>Cope, p.17.

6:9-10)<sup>3</sup> This allusion is made explicit in verses 14,15, however there is a discrepancy between Matthew's emphasis and that of the Isaiah text. Matthew contrasts the disciple's ability to understand the parables with the inability of the crowd to do so. Isaiah, on the other hand, suggests that no one is able to comprehend; there is no separation of a group from the whole people. Continuing the narrative, Matthew calls attention to the fact that the disciples are blessed because they have been given understanding, an understanding longed for but never attained by prophets and righteous men.

Matthew resumes the discourse with the interpretation of the parable of the Sower. The theory provides the essential link between parable and interpretation. This is "readily seen in the use of the terms hear and understand and in identifying the seed as the word of the Kingdom."<sup>4</sup> Matthew interprets the parable, through the words of Jesus, in terms of those who hear the word but don't understand and those who hear the word and understand.<sup>5</sup> The interpretation reinforces the theory; the separation of those who comprehend the parables (disciples) from those who do not (crowd).

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<sup>3</sup>Cope contends that these three words are essential to the Matthean theory of parables and that the following interpretations within the parables discourse revolve around them.

<sup>4</sup>Cope, p.19.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid., p.20. Cope correctly states that the interpretation does not deal with four kinds of people but only two, those who understand and those who don't.

The discourse continues with the parable of the Tares (13:24-30). Unlike the Sower parable, which is a Kingdom parable through Matthew's allegorical interpretation, the Tares parable is a Kingdom parable on its own accord, i.e., not dependent upon the interpretation to supply this orientation. As a result, the parable stresses the separation of those who would be in the kingdom from those who would not. Matthew goes beyond this in identifying those who will be included with those who understand (and the reverse). The evangelist has provided an epistemological dimension to the original dichotomy of righteous and wicked. The Tares parable is also closely allied with the twin parables of the Mustard Seed and the Leaven (13:31-33). Like the Tares parable, they are naturally kingdom parables but Matthew does not provide interpretations.

At this point, it is necessary to point out the relationship of the Tares and the Net Parables, a set of twins. Such a relationship is suggested by the parallel imagery of good-bad plants and good-bad fish. This imagery, within the context of the parables, embodies the separation motif of righteous and wicked.

The Tares, Mustard Seed, and Leaven parables complement the general thrust of the discourse. The author has taken the original separation motif and further refined it. The addition of Matthew is not who will be included in the kingdom, but the separation motif extended to those who understand the secrets which only the disciples can know.

These are the ones who will be included and therefore the righteous.

Following these parables, Matthew incorporates a section on Jesus' use of parables (13:34-35) as a means to buttress his theory. In verse 34, Matthew reiterates the central theme of 13:11-12 that Jesus spoke to the crowds in parables so that only the disciples may know the secrets of the kingdom. The quotation from Ps 78:2 (13:35) follows the same pattern present in 13:14-15, the confirmation of this theory of parables by an appeal to scriptures. Matthew's use of the quotation introduces an important new motif, the parables contain secrets hidden since the creation of the world. For Matthew, the parables are the key to a source of knowledge that has previously been concealed from man.

The discourse next proceeds to the interpretation of the Tares parable (13:36-43) which introduces a change of setting and a decrease in the size of the audience. The scene depicted in verse 13:36 enables Jesus to explain the parable in private thereby protecting the secrets of the kingdom. Similar to the Sower interpretation, the Tares' interpretation stems from a question by the disciples, directed toward Jesus, concerning the meaning of the parable. This parable is also interpreted in an allegorical manner. As mentioned before, the Tares parable does not depend upon the allegorical interpretation to become a kingdom parable. The interpretation explains the various aspects of the story (good seed, the field, the enemy, etc.) in terms of their

relationship to the kingdom.

Three parables, the Hidden Treasure (13:44), the Pearl (13:45-46), and the Net (13:47-48), follow this interpretation. Of the three, the Net parable is the only one accompanied by an interpretation (13:49-50). It is congruent with the Tares' interpretation in that it emphasizes the separation of just and wicked. Although similar, this interpretation is not elicited from Jesus by a question; it spontaneously follows the parable. Previously the question enabled Matthew to insert his theory of parables. Matthew probably felt that he need not repeat the theory since the point has already been made and, as a result, places the interpretation directly after the parable.

The conclusion of the parable discourse, 13:51-52, ends the section in a manner that is consistent with the total presentation. The disciples' positive answer to Jesus' question secures the final confirmation of Matthew's belief that the disciples' knowledge of the parables enables them to possess the secrets of the kingdom. Verse 13:52 alludes that the disciple of Jesus (scribe) possesses the knowledge of the kingdom of heaven (treasure) and is able to secure from this knowledge the secrets pertaining to the kingdom. Matthew classifies the secrets in terms of old and new.

There may be double meaning in the words

'old things and new things.' The Christian scribe will bring forth new things; i.e., secrets of the end time

and old things; i.e., things hidden since creation. Moreover the Christian scribe has in his storehouse not just the texts of the OT but also the parables of Jesus as resources for discovering the secrets.<sup>6</sup>

The understanding of old and new secrets points back to Matthew's use of Ps 78:2 (13:35) which amplifies the importance of parables.

Matthew's parables discourse is a highly developed account concerning a theory of parables complemented by a consistent application of the theory to the presentation of the parables and the selected interpretations.<sup>7</sup> The evangelist has skillfully worked the material into a logical and coherent whole.

The Marcan parable discourse begins with the development of the setting and audience which serves as the background for his account. The large crowd provides a suitable audience for the parables and the seaside setting furnishes an adequate site for both teaching and accomodating the masses. With the context established, Mark relates the parable of the Sower. It is interesting to note that the parable begins with a command to listen. The command is

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<sup>6</sup>Ibid., p.25.

<sup>7</sup>The discourse contains two separation emphases, those who understand/those who don't and wicked/righteous. The first emphasis is Matthew's central theme as evidenced by the fact that it is stressed at the beginning and end. The second emphasis is inherent in the kingdom parables and gives rise to the final. Matthew probably intends the components of the emphases to complement one another, i.e., righteous equals those who understand and the wicked are the same as those who don't understand.

reinforced after the parable is presented with the free floating saying, "He who has ears to hear, let him hear."

A theory of parables follows the Sower parable. The theory stems from a smaller group of hearers, perhaps the disciples: "those who were about him with the twelve," who inquire about parables.<sup>8</sup> Mark's particular manner in phrasing the question enables him to lead directly toward a theory of parables. The question's ambiguous nature provides a number of options for possible answers. This ambiguity may cause a tension in the narrative but it also allows Mark to present his theory. Mark understands the parables as conveyors of the secret (note the singular) of the Kingdom of God. The parables hide the secret from those outside who hear the parables but do not understand their true meaning.

After the theory, Mark continues with the interpretation of the parable of the Sower. This section opens with a double question by Jesus directed to the disciples. Mark's placement of the question is troublesome because it would seem to be better placed after verse 4:10. The narrative would flow in a much more consistent manner without verses 4:11-12 which disrupts the continuity of the passage. The ambiguity present in verse 4:10 enables the author to present a parable's theory and an interpretation of the

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<sup>8</sup>The Marcan account, at this point, provides no clue to the identity of those who were about him with the twelve. Verse 4:34 furnishes a possible identification of this group with the disciples.

Sower parable. Granted, the narrative tension still persists but Mark has made the necessary presentation. Another important point, with regard to the double question, concerns the sense of irritability of Jesus toward the disciples. This coincides with Mark's perception that the disciples are somewhat obtuse toward Jesus' message.

The form of the interpretation of the parable of the Sower rests upon the term word which fails to make a link with the theory of parables.<sup>9</sup> Mark's allegorical interpretation of the parable, however, binds "the word" to a specific separation motif. The word is the proclamation of the kingdom which does or does not take root among the various hearers. The result is either inclusion in or exclusion from the kingdom.<sup>10</sup>

Mark's next section, a group of sayings dealing with the purpose of parables (4:21-25), exhorts the disciples to an understanding of the parables. It may be inferred from the thrust of the previous interpretation and the content of the sayings that Mark assumes that all hearers of the parables possess the potential for understanding. If this is the case, Mark envisions a much broader audience for

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<sup>9</sup>Cope, p.20, fn.28.

<sup>10</sup>As in Matthew, Mark's Sower parable is made a kingdom parable through the allegorical interpretation. The same situation exists in the Lucan narrative.

<sup>11</sup>The problematic nature of this context is reflected in tension between 4:11 and 4:22.



the parables than just the disciples. Although the author has brought together a number of sayings in an attempt to clarify his perspective concerning parables, it must be noted that their present context appears forced.<sup>11</sup>

The parable of the Seed Growing Secretly and the Mustard Seed follow the group of sayings. The Secretly Growing Seed parable provides an assortment of imagery; the secret nature of the kingdom, its mysterious growth, the apocalyptic certainty of the kingdom, and the contrast of planting and harvest. Despite this variety, one is able to discern that Mark's "central teaching of the parable is the certainty, indeed the inevitability of the Kingdom's coming, once the seed was sown,..."<sup>12</sup> By using the comparison of the seed and the patience of the farmer, Mark assures the reader that the kingdom has taken root (the seed) even though the parousia (harvest) has not arrived. Mark emphasizes the certainty of the kingdom and the difference between small beginnings and the magnitude of the end results.

Mark ends the parable discourse with a section on Jesus' use of parables (4:33-34). This particular section serves as a conclusion while at the same time referring back to 4:11-12 where Mark introduces his theory of parables. Verse 34 supports the view that the parables are explained to the disciples, not just the twelve. The author also

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<sup>12</sup> Vincent Taylor, The Gospel According To St. Mark (London: Macmillan & Co., LTD, 1959), p.263.

hints in 4:33 that there are more kingdom parables, possibly a reference to his source.

The Lucan parable discourse begins in a more detailed manner. Luke furnishes a setting for Jesus' preaching of the kingdom of God; the cities and villages of Galilee (8:11). He has already used the setting of Jesus teaching to a crowd on the shore from a boat (5:3) and utilizes a different setting for the kingdom parables. Although the crowd plays no significant function in determining the setting, it does augment the audience which is necessary for teaching the parables. Luke mentions that the twelve were with Jesus but he also gives a detailed description of some of the prominent women disciples, one of his special interests.

The parable of the Sower, which follows this introduction, elicits a question from the disciples as to the meaning of the parable. Prior to the explanation of the parable (8:11-15), Jesus informs the disciples that they know the secrets (note the plural) of the kingdom of God but the others do not (8:10). The parables present the message to the crowd but only the disciples know their true meaning. Verse 8:10 is not a response to the disciples question because they ask about a specific parable (Sower) and Jesus answers with a theory of parables. Yet the verse appears to prepare the way for a response.

After the remark in 8:10, Jesus proceeds to interpret the parable (8:11-15). Luke organizes the interpretation, in terms of form, around the noun, word, while maintaining a stress on the certainty of the kingdom and the separation

between those who hear and abide by the word and those who don't. The evangelist ends the interpretation with the phrase, "...and bring forth fruit with patience."<sup>13</sup> The emphasis on patience implies a need to wait even though one possesses the word, indicative of Luke's delayed parousia conception.

Luke continues with a group of three sayings which deal with the purpose of parables (8:16-18). These verses are intended to amplify the parable theory presented in 8:10. The author, however, creates tension in his narrative which may be found in 8:10 and 8:16. Despite this tension, it appears that Luke considers these sayings to be of particular importance to parables and that they support his understanding of them.

The discourse concludes with an incident between Jesus and his relatives. Luke utilizes the attempt of Jesus' mother and brothers to see him as a means to point out that relationship to Jesus is based upon those who hear the word and the subsequent action that demonstrates that the hearer has internalized the word.

The linear analysis of the kingdom parables discourse reveals that there is a great deal of common material among the accounts as the evangelists shaped their Gospels in accordance with their particular perspectives. The manner in which the common matter has been included should aid our

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<sup>13</sup>Grant, p.705.

quest to establish priority and dependency.<sup>14</sup> In detecting the method of employment, Cope asks two questions which will provide some direction in this area;

...do elements of Matthew's special theory of interpretations of parables appear in Mark and Luke even though they are not employed meaningfully by these authors? Or, does the Marcan theory of the Messianic secret appear in Matthew and Luke and thereby betray their use of Mark?<sup>15</sup>

In attempt to answer these questions, our discussion must include a lateral analysis. Such an analysis will locate the common synoptic material and point to the possible use of the material by the different evangelists which should reveal potential dependent relationships. From the diagram (see Appendix II), three significant areas emerge and will serve as the basic reference points in determining dependency.

The first significant section concerns the theories of parables (Mt 13:10-17/Mk 4:10-12/Lk 8:9-10). In all three accounts this section begins with a question posed by the disciples. The Matthean account contains a direct question as to why Jesus speaks to the crowds in parables. This question enables Matthew to present a structurally consistent theory of parables, complete with an Old Testament reference (Isaiah 6:19-10), and an application

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<sup>14</sup>As stated in Chapter I, the author presupposes that priority and dependency should be sought within the synoptic record prior to the construction of external sources.

<sup>15</sup>Cope, p.30.

of that theory, the interpretation of the parable of the Sower.<sup>16</sup> Mark's question is somewhat ambiguous and is directed toward parables in general. The question could have been answered in a variety of ways, depending upon how Jesus understood its overall thrust. Mark obviously presented it with a definite answer in mind, namely a theory of parables. Luke, in contrast, records a question that seeks the meaning of the specific parable of the Sower which has just been related. Prior to an explanation of the parable, Luke inserts a verse that reveals his understanding of parables in general and provides a background for the coming interpretation.

These three presentations possess different characteristics in terms of clarity. Matthew's account is clear and continuous arising out of a logical and coherent flow. Luke's account also demonstrates a great deal of clarity. There is, however, a noticeable degree of discontinuity between question and interpretation due to the insertion of the parables theory. The theory is presented almost as a digression, disrupting, but not destroying the flow of the passage. Luke, and Mark, also show a tension between their parables theory and their collection of sayings. Mark's narrative is the least clear of the three. The question beginning the section is ambiguous and open to a variety of answers. It is not a necessity that Mark's

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<sup>16</sup>Matthew's use of the Old Testament in this instance is consistent with its use throughout the gospel.

parable's theory has to follow such a question.

In determining dependency, cases can be made for the Two-Document and the Griesbach hypothesis. From a Two-Document perspective, one must explain Matthew and Luke in terms of Mark. Mark's ambiguity would have created problems for Matthew and Luke in the composition of their gospels. Matthew, in using Mark as his primary source, not only notices the ambiguity but also an implicit reference to Isaiah 6:9-10. Since Matthew is familiar with the method of Rabbinic exegesis, he expands Mark's parable theory in terms of this knowledge and complements the theory with the actual Isaiah quotation. He also reworks Mark's opening question which now leads directly to the theory of parables. Luke handles Mark's ambiguity in a different manner. Unlike Matthew, Luke is not familiar with the methodology of Rabbinic exegesis or such an interpretation would not be helpful to his readers. As a result, Luke changes Mark's question into a specific query concerning the previous parable of the Sower. In this way, Luke retains much of the Marcan account in a much more coherent manner.

The Two-Document hypothesis provides an adequate explanation of synoptic relationships within this section but it also contains two limitations. First, as Cope points out, Matthew's parable theory depends upon the words see, hear, and understand which are important motifs in Isaiah 6:9-10. It seems improbable that Matthew created his entire discourse with Mark's implicit reference to

Isaiah as a basis. A more likely assumption is that Matthew intended to create a parable discourse utilizing scriptural references as a means to reinforce his position. This view gains strength when one considers that Matthew uses a psalm (78:2) to develop his narrative and Mark makes no reference, implicit or explicit, to this psalm. Second, there is an agreement of Matthew and Luke against Mark; Matthew and Luke both contain the plural form of secret while Mark employs the singular. It seems unlikely that Luke would deviate from Mark at this point especially since the bulk of both passages, within the section, are so similar.<sup>17</sup>

3 Although the Two-Document hypothesis has certain weaknesses, we still have access to the Griesbach hypothesis which advocates Matthean priority. This hypothesis would consider the synoptic relationships in the following manner. Luke, using Matthew as his primary source, changes Matthew's question (Mt. 13:10) so it refers directly to the parable of the Sower. Despite the change in question, Luke retains Matthew's answer for it provides a theory of parables.

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<sup>17</sup>The use of different forms of the word secret, singular versus plural, points to different conceptions of the idea among the evangelists. Mark is concerned with the apocalyptic certainty of the kingdom and the Messianic secret which points toward the kingdom. Matthew understands secrets in terms of things hidden which the parables reveal. These secrets point to the kingdom and enable man to detect the manifestations of the kingdom. Luke's use of the plural demonstrates an orientation similar to Matthew but other parts of the narrative show an affinity to Mark, i.e., reliance on the term, word, in the interpretation of the Sower parable. It appears that Luke is a middle ground between Matthew and Luke.

However, in order to make the answer understandable to his own frame of reference, ~~he~~ changes the context of Matthew's verse 13:12 to a later place in his discourse and he deletes the Isaiah quotation as it is not essential to the parable theory. Luke also changes the context of Matthew's verses 13:16-17 because it fits his purpose in dealing with the seventy disciples (10:23-24). Mark, as a conflator, observes the discrepancy between Matthew's general question about parables and Luke's specific question. In an attempt to reconcile the two accounts, Mark develops an ambiguous question, about parables in general, and uses Luke's shortened version of the parables theory. Mark also follows Luke in relocating Matthew's verse 13:12 and places it in the same context as Luke. Mark avoids the Isaiah quotation as it would be unessential to a gentile perspective. Finally, Mark deletes the passage of the blessedness of the disciples, which Luke has relocated, because of his animosity toward the disciples. Luke and Mark have disturbed the coherency of content and form of the Matthean account in an attempt to shape the material from their own perspective.

The second significant section concerns the interpretation of the parable of the Sower. Since the three evangelists treat ~~the~~ parable as a kingdom parable, the interpretation deals with the separation between those who hear the word and understand and those who hear the word and don't understand. Although this separation is a common motif, an important contextual difference arises that distinguishes



Matthew from Mark and Luke. As mentioned in the linear analysis, Matthew's interpretation depends upon the key words Kingdom, hear, and understand. Cope states that these words serve as the basis to Matthew's parable theory which has an affinity with the prophets at Oumran.

According to this theory, the parables contain within them 'secrets' concerning the end time. These secrets are not open to the casual listener or reader but can only be grasped by the ones privileged to know the secrets, that is, the disciples.<sup>18</sup>

For Matthew, this theory becomes the foundation of the parable discourse. Although the similarity exists Mark and Luke's interpretation differs from Matthew in that they emphasize the term word as opposed to see, hear, and understand. Their change in emphasis is important because it creates a tension between their parable theory and their interpretation of the Sower. A different emphasis has caused a structural discontinuity that is not found in Matthew. The format of Mark and Luke's interpretation should reinforce the theory of parables since parable and interpretation are separated in order to present the theory.

Synoptic relationships in this section are explainable in terms of the Griesbach hypothesis. The Two-Document hypothesis becomes more problematic because it requires Matthew to meticulously develop a theory of parables, in the form of a specific interpretation, which was germinated by an implicit reference to Isaiah in the Marcan text.

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<sup>18</sup>Cope, p.20.

It is much more probable that Matthew began his gospel with a preconceived theory of parables than he developed the theory from obscure clues in Mark. Such a position would put Matthew at odds with his source (Mark) since he would continually have to change Mark's emphasis throughout his discourse.

The Griesbach hypothesis answers the above problems. When Luke alters or deletes a good portion of Matthew's parable theory, he must also alter the interpretation accordingly. Since Matthew's interpretation is dependent upon allegory, Luke is able to change the emphasis of the structure while maintaining the particular separation motif. Luke may have changed Matthew's emphasis because he was not familiar with Matthew's Jewish imagery or because an emphasis on the term word gave a better feeling for his theological orientation. The change causes a discontinuity between content and form in the Lucan text. When Mark conflates his two sources, he continues to follow the Lucan emphasis as he had done in recording the parable theory. Mark follows Matthew in recording Matthew's verses 13:21,22 probably because they had an application to the life situation of Mark's church.

The third significant section deals with the purpose of parables (Mk 4:21-25/Lk 8:16-18). (Matthew has parallels to the sayings of this section but they are scattered throughout the gospel.) Mark and Luke attempt to utilize the sayings as a means to reinforce the previous interpretation

of the Sower parable and the theory of parables. Matthew does not need to make such an attempt since his material is sufficiently logical and coherent. The sayings on the Matthean gospel are in contexts that utilize them in a comfortable manner. Mark and Luke's context seems forced and artificial.

In terms of priority, Taylor considers Mark as primary and suggests "that Mark derived them (the sayings) from an independent sayings-collection or from oral tradition."<sup>19</sup> This suggestion, however, depends upon external sources, which, in our analysis, we have attempted to avoid if a viable explanation is available within synoptic parameters. The Griesbach hypothesis provides such an explanation. Luke collects sayings from Matthew's gospel that appear relevant to the parable discourse. Since Luke departs from the Matthean emphasis and structure throughout a great deal of his discourse, he may feel a need to utilize some Matthean verses in order to augment the content of the discourse. Luke does not incorporate Matthew's verse 7:2, unlike Mark, because he has already used it in a previous context, 6:38. Mark, as throughout the discourse, follows Luke and adds the equivalent to Matthew's verse 7:2 as a relevant saying. Although the Griesbach hypothesis is preferred in analyzing this section, it cannot be held as fast as in the previous two sections and should be regarded

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<sup>19</sup>Taylor, p.262.

in a more tentative manner.

The above analysis has offered some important insights into the parables discourse of the synoptic gospels. The conclusion can be drawn that the Griesbach hypothesis provides the most reasonable explanation of synoptic relationships in this specific narrative. Cope's question concerning the Messianic secret within Matthew and Luke must be answered in the negative. His other question, concerning the presence of Matthew's theory of parables in Mark or Luke, demands an affirmative answer. The evidence seems to suggest that Luke disrupted the flow and logic of the Matthean text and Mark, as a conflator, followed Luke.

## CHAPTER III

## SYNOPTIC APOCALYPSE

Apocalypticism, a Hellenistic-Oriental phenomenon rooted in the inter-testamental period, embodies a unique world view which has resulted in a particular type of literary genre. Within the first centuries of Christianity, the apocalyptic influence became a potent factor in the religion's development. The synoptic gospels vividly attest to this influence. Specifically, the Synoptic Apocalypse (Mt 24:1-51/Mk 13:1-37/Lk 21:5-36), suggests the strongest relationship between Christian proclamation and the apocalyptic mind-set. For the source analyst, the discourse provides an interesting challenge, as one attempts to discern the lines of synoptic dependency among a substantial body of apocalyptic imagery.

Before a consideration of the individual synoptic accounts, in the form of linear analysis, a discussion of the apocalyptic element of the discourse is in order. The most prominent theory concerning the origin of the discourse postulates that the bulk of the narrative is based upon an authentic specimen of Jewish apocalyptic.<sup>1</sup> Subsequent

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<sup>1</sup>L. Morris, Apocalyptic (Grand Rapids: W.B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1972), p.74. Morris identifies this theory as the "Little Apocalypse Theory" and considers Bultmann and V. Taylor as proponents of the theory.

Christian redaction of the work, became manifest within the synoptic record. The theory provides some valuable insights into the nature of the discourse. It aids the task of isolating the prominent Jewish apocalyptic imagery;

first the so-called 'woes' or 'travail pangs of the Messiah,' the famines and wars and rumours of wars which were to be the preliminary signs of the approaching end; then, the gradual culmination of horrors, 'the abomination of desolation in the holy place,' ...and, lastly, the appearance of the Son of man on the clouds of heaven.<sup>2</sup>

Although Jewish apocalyptic imagery is present, it does not imply that the synoptic discourse is merely another example of Jewish apocalyptic literature. It has "been influenced by the vocabulary of apocalyptic but some of the most characteristic features...are not to be found in apocalyptic."<sup>3</sup> A distinguishing feature of Jewish apocalypses revolves around the visionary being addressed or his telling of what he has experienced in the first person. The Synoptic Apocalypse, however, utilizes the second person plural imperative in relating the events that will accompany the end of the age. "Its purpose is not to impart esoteric information but to sustain faith and obedience."<sup>4</sup> The synoptic accounts are

an urgent exhortation to true discipleship rather than typical specimen of apocalyptic speculation. There is much about the last things it is true. But the emphasis is not

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<sup>2</sup>W. Sanday, "The Apocalyptic Element in the Gospels," The Gibbet Journal, X, 1911-1912, p.94f.

<sup>3</sup>Morris, p.75.

<sup>4</sup>C.E. Cranfield, The Gospel According to St. Mark (Cambridge: The University Press, 1959), p.338.

there. The emphasis is on true and loyal following of Jesus, on being faithful disciples no matter what the trials.<sup>5</sup>

Whatever the origin of the story, the evangelists have taken up apocalyptic imagery and tailored it to their perspectives. Although this imagery complements the discourse, it does not control the text's emphasis or perspective. The linear readings should reveal each author's perspective and their use of the apocalyptic imagery.

The Matthean discourse begins with a prediction of the destruction of the temple. Jesus makes the prediction in response to the disciples' reference to the buildings of the temple complex. The saying serves as an introduction to the discourse, but, in addition, prepares the reader for what is to follow. Verse 24:3 contains a basic outline of the discourse's content; the date of the destruction, the sign of Jesus coming, and the sign of the close of the age. The verse discloses Matthew's understanding of the parousia. He associates the destruction of the temple with the end of the age. Matthew may be comparing the temple's future destruction with the past ones. As in the past, the temple's annihilation signaled a new phase in the history of God's elect; the future destruction will signal a new phase, the culmination of history. The temple is pivotal for God's elect, whom Matthew now considers to be Jewish-Christians. A second point, Matthew associates the eschaton with the coming of Jesus. Jesus presence as the end time supports his messianic nature.

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<sup>5</sup>Morris, p.76.

With the introduction established, Matthew proceeds to the signs of the parousia (24:4-8). The use of the command, "Take heed that no one leads you astray," provides the central thrust of the discourse; no matter what happens at the end time make sure that you (disciples) remain faithful. This is the essential idea. With this warning in mind, Matthew presents the signs which prepares the elect for the coming trials. Verses 5-7 predict the events at the end time; false Christs, wars, rumors of wars, famines and earthquakes, indicative of the parousia's terrible nature. Matthew's verse 8, "all this is but the beginning of the sufferings," dramatizes that much more tribulations are sure to follow.

Continuing, the discourse relates the troubles that will befall the disciples as the parousia approaches. The evangelist is explicit and talks of tribulation, death, hatred, betrayal, false prophets, and wickedness. Matthew's phrase of encouragement, "But he who endures to the end will be saved," reinforces his central emphasis that faith will provide the necessary vehicle for salvation. Verse 24:14 reveals that Matthew interprets the coming of the parousia as a function of the preaching of the gospel of the kingdom. The verse does not infer Pauline expectations, a certain number of gentiles must embrace the faith prior to Israel's salvation (Rom 11:25-26), but rather suggests that the preaching will establish a suitable environment, in the world, vital to the coming parousia. In addition, the verse's placement implies that the spreading of the gospel will be accompanied by the aforementioned



troubles.

Matthew's next section, 24:15-22, depicts the events that will befall the disciples when they see the desolating sacrilege. The text identifies the sacrilege as that mentioned by the prophet Daniel (11:31). The parenthetical comment following the verse, "let the reader understand," encourages the disciples to interpret this sign in a specific manner. Although Matthew avoids providing an interpretation, his readers surely understood the sign.

Matthew either looks back to the war or supposes that still another desecration will occur in 'a holy place,' not necessarily the holy place. The Jewish War in fact, began with the profanation of a synagogue in Caesarea.<sup>6</sup>

Unfortunately, it must be recognized that the text is ambiguous and the reference cannot lead to an exact date of the gospel's composition.

The evangelist next warns against the rise of false messiahs (24:23-28). These men will display many signs and wonders resulting in their proclamation (as messiah) in many places (the wilderness and inner rooms) but they cannot match the coming of the Son of man.

With the introduction of this notion, the coming of the Son of man, Matthew augments the concept with a vivid description (24:29-31). The coming will be preceded by catastrophes of a cosmic nature. Then there will "appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven." Matthew gives no indication of the

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<sup>6</sup>S.E. Johnson, p.547. Matthew's source may be referring to Caligula's plans to erect the statue but Matthew probably intends another interpretation.

sign's character. Once the sign has appeared "all the tribes of the earth will moan" and then the Son of man will come on the clouds of heaven (24:30). This verse seems to be an allusion to two Old Testament texts, Zech. 12:10-14 and Dan. 7:13-14. The Son of man's coming will culminate in the gathering of the elect "from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other." Matthew's use of the verse may be dependent upon a specific petition of the Eighteen Benedictions of the synagogue service: 'Sound the great horn for our freedom; lift up the banner to gather our exiles and gather us from the four corners of the earth.'<sup>7</sup>

The Fig Tree parable supports Matthew's previous point, the parousia's coming will be accompanied by discernible signs. Verse 24:34 suggests an imminent end which complements Matthew's exhortation to watchfulness (24:37-44). The author makes special mention that the time of the end is unknown, inclusive of the angels and the Son, which appears to be an attempt to discourage the disciples against speculation of the end time, a common feature of apocalyptic.

The concluding section of the discourse, 24:37-51, concerns watchfulness and faithfulness. An allusion to the Old Testament figure, Noah, introduces the watchfulness motif and provides a reference for understanding the Son of man's coming. The following Watchful Householder saying concerns the parousia's unexpected nature which, again, points to Matthew's conviction the end time is incalculable. The final

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<sup>7</sup>Ibid., p.550.

exhortation of the discourse, to faithfulness, returns to the opening theme. The story of the faithful and wise servant portrays the fate of those who endure and those who are led astray. Matthew's return to his original emphasis secures the orientation of the discourse, namely that faith is the foundation of discipleship enabling the follower of Jesus to overcome the most trying hardship of history, the end of the age.

The Marcan apocalyptic discourse, 13:1-37, opens with a prediction of the temple's destruction. One of the disciple's fascination with ~~the~~ temple's stones and buildings elicits the prediction. The setting is then altered from the temple to the Mount of Olives, where Peter, James, John and Andrew privately ask Jesus about the time and the sign when these things will take place (13:3). Mark has obviously used the disciples question in order to introduce the discourse but the specifics of the question appear "to refer exclusively to the destruction of the Temple rather than to the Apocalyptic Discourse as a whole."<sup>8</sup> The Marcan verse, then, is ambiguous in light of the upcoming discourse. The phrase, "these things," seems to be an attempt to expand the limits of the question. The evangelist wants to suggest more than the destruction of the temple; "the series of catastrophic events of which it would be a part, thus anticipating the subject of the rest of

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<sup>8</sup>v. Taylor, p.501.

the chapter."<sup>9</sup>

In response to the disciples' question, Jesus relates the signs that will indicate the parousia (13:5-8). People will appear claiming to come in Jesus' name and will lead many astray. Other signs will become manifest, wars, rumors of war, earthquakes and famines but these things are only the beginning of the woes that will afflict mankind.

The discourse continues with an explanation of the troubles that will come upon the disciples (13:9-13). The text incorporates a command to take heed as a means to introduce these troubles. The placement of this command throughout the discourse, 13:5,9,23,33, clarifies Mark's intention. Mark does not relate the signs of the parousia to aid apocalyptic speculation but rather to exhort the reader to watchfulness in face of the imminent end of the age. This warning "leads up to the final climatic word in the discourse, 'Watch' (vs. 37), and helps set the tone of the whole chapter."<sup>10</sup> The list of terrors that will befall the disciples is impressive, yet verse 13:13b provides the reward for those who endure, salvation.

The author now provides an additional sign of the parousia, the desolating sacrilege (13:14-20). The text does not reveal the nature of the sacrilege although one may discern an indirect allusion to Daniel 9:27. The end of the verse,

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<sup>9</sup>F.G. Grant, p.856.

<sup>10</sup>Ibid., p.857. -

"set up where it ought not to be," and the parenthetical comment, "let the reader understand," implies the knowledge of the sacrilege in Mark's community, including a particular interpretation. The sacrilege may refer to Caligula's plan (ca. 41 C.E.) (indicative of Mark's source?) but Mark's emphasis lies elsewhere. Mark hints at trouble in Judea (13:14) which possibly concerns the destruction of Jerusalem (70 C.E.). The passages' ambiguity cannot support an exact date; Mark may be referring to the period prior to, during, or after the destruction of the city. Mark places a great deal of importance in this sign since it will affect the disciples' activities and lifestyles (13:14b-16). The troubles accompanying the sign are made more horrifying because they will be especially harsh upon pregnant and nursing women (13:17). Mark continues to heighten the terrible nature of this unique tribulation and only by the will of God, for the elect, has the period been shortened.

A warning against false Christs and prophets (13:21-23) and a description of the parousia of the Son of man (13:24-27) follows. When the troubles on earth have peaked, cosmic events will occur, signaling the Son of man's coming. The Son will arrive upon the clouds of heaven with power and glory. His angels will collect the elect from the ends of heaven.

Mark summarizes the signs of the parousia with the parable of the Fig Tree. Just as the leafing of the fig tree indicates the approach of summer so too will these signs indicate the approach of the parousia. In order to convey his

understanding of the parable, Mark presents three verses 13:30-32. Verse 13:30 looks toward an imminent end of the age; it will occur within the lifespan of the disciples. The next verse, 13:31, places the chapter among the words of Jesus. The evangelist interprets these words as the only things of permanence in an everchanging cosmos. Although Mark, through the signs and the parable, has provided clues to the parousia, he does not wish to encourage apocalyptic speculation. He avoids this by positing the knowledge of the time of the parousia in the Father, beyond the reach of the Son himself. The disciples now know the signs of the end which Mark considers sufficient information to satisfy their curiosity concerning the parousia.

Mark's conclusion, 13:33-37, secures the dominant motif of watchfulness. The necessary information has been provided and this final exhortation stresses the need to be continually aware if one is to survive the last days.

Luke's discourse, 21:5-36, begins with a prediction of the temple's destruction. The prediction enables him to introduce the discourse through a question concerning the time and sign of the temple's demise (21:7).<sup>11</sup> The author considers this question a sufficient introduction and makes no reference to other signs that will accompany the end of the age. Also of importance is Luke's setting of the discourse, the temple

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<sup>11</sup>As evidenced throughout his gospel Luke expects a much less immediate parousia.

precincts, not the Mount of Olives. "This is in keeping with Luke's scheme, according to which there are before the Last Supper only two places in which Jesus is found: in the Temple by day and on the Mount of Olives by night."<sup>12</sup>

Once the setting has been established, the discourse proceeds to the signs of the parousia (21:8-19). The narrative begins with "a warning against false messiahs and all assumptions about the imminence of the end. Luke strengthens the warning by ascribing the proclamation the time is at hand to pseudo-Christ."<sup>13</sup> He continues with a description of the terrors that will afflict the world, namely wars, tumults, earthquakes, famines, pestilences, and great signs from heaven. Luke again stresses a delayed parousia in verse 21:9d, "but the end will not be at once." In 21:12-19, the evangelist provides a detailed account of the fate of the disciples prior to the aforementioned terrors. Luke, however, does give encouragement by telling the disciples that "not a hair of your head will perish" and "by your endurance you will gain your lives."

The next section of the discourse deals with the fate of Jerusalem (21:20-24). Luke understands the city to play a role in the coming parousia. He describes surrounding armies which signify the city's desolation. A warning is

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<sup>12</sup>H. Congelmann, The Theology of St. Luke, trans. Geoffrey Buswell, (New York: Harper and Row, Publishers, 1960), p.125.

<sup>13</sup>S.M. Gilmour, p.362.-

given to avoid the city at this time for the days of vengeance are at hand which fulfills what was written (cf. Hos. 9:7; Jer. 5:29; 46:10). The author then provides an account of what will happen to this people (21:23b-24): "This people" appears to refer to the Jews. They will fall by the sword, be led captive among all nations, and their city, Jerusalem, will be destroyed by the Gentiles. The polemic against the Jews agrees with Luke's perspective that the Jews are responsible for the death of Jesus. (Luke minimizes the role of the Romans in this affair at the expense of the Jews.)

An account of the ~~parousia~~ parousia of the Son of man (21:25-28) follows, depicting cosmic disasters that will accompany the end. When this is accomplished the Son of man will come in a cloud with power and glory. In this verse, (21:27), Luke uses the pronoun "they" to refer to those who will view the event, an apparent reference to the Jews mentioned earlier. The account ends with a verse (21:28) that is meant to ~~instill~~ instill hope in the disciples. Within this verse, Luke utilizes the term "redemption" which is unique in the gospels. The evangelist probably used the word to distinguish between the results of the Easter event and parousia.

The Fig Tree parable (21:29-31) enables Luke to compare the parousia to the leafing of the fig tree. The signs given in the discourse will signal the end's approach just as the leaves of the fig tree indicate the coming of summer. Verse 21:31, following the parable, confirms the comparison and associates the signs with the nearness of the kingdom of God. Luke's use of verse 21:32 appears to contradict his belief in



a delayed parousia but he may have understood "generation" in a more broader context than the lifespan of the disciples. The authority of the discourse receives added strength by 21:33 which assures the permanence of Jesus' words.

Luke concludes the discourse with an exhortation to watchfulness and endurance (21:34-36). The emphasis of the conclusion, endurance in the face of the cares of this life, supplements the delayed parousia theme. The end is not imminent but he who endures the trials and tribulations of life will, in the end, "stand before the Son of man."

The linear readings of the Synoptic Apocalypse demonstrate the particular emphasis of each evangelist; Matthew--faithfulness, Mark--watchfulness, and Luke--endurance. Other emphases are discernible and the accounts show a great deal of overlap in this area. Also there exists a large overlap of common material.<sup>14</sup> This large degree of commonality across the synoptic accounts complicates source analysis. As a means to surmount this obstacle, the lateral analysis will consider the following sections of the discourse as relevant to our study; Mt 24:1-3/Mk 13:1-4/Lk 21:5-7; Mt 24:9-14/Mk 13:14/Lk 21:20/ Mk 13:33-37.

The first section, Mt 24:1-3/Mk 13:1-4/Lk 21:5-7, presents each evangelist's introduction to the discourse.

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<sup>14</sup>The material common to the gospels goes beyond the parameters of the discourse. The most notable example is the so-called Q material; Mt 24:26-28/ Lk 17:23-24,37; Mt 24:37-41/ Lk 17:26-27,30,34-35; Mt 24:42-44/Lk 12:39-40; Mt 24:45-51/ Lk 12:42-46 which demonstrates agreement of Matthew and Luke against Mark.

The question concerning the temple's demise marks the significant part of the introduction because it reveals each author's perspective in the coming discourse. Matthew identifies the temple's destruction as a sign of the coming parousia, typical of his Jewish conception of history. For Matthew, Jesus is not only associated with the end time; He becomes the central focus of it. Mark understands the temple's destruction as a manifestation of the end which is almost present. His question, 13:4, displays a certain degree of ambiguity in terms of the discourse. It seems more concerned with the demise of the temple, contrary to the thrust of the discourse. Mark is not unaware of the limitations of the question and attempts to alleviate the problem with the phrase, "these things."

The Lucan question, similar to the Marcan form, emphasizes the time and the sign of the temple's destruction. This emphasis finds a more comfortable context in the Lucan text because Luke's discourse, as the entire gospel, gives special attention to Jerusalem, the temple's city. Of the three questions, Matthew demonstrates a much more developed conception of the end time.<sup>15</sup> Mark and Luke's question deals basically with the temple and fails to mention other Messianic activity. Also, Matthew ties the parousia and Jesus presence together, indicative of Christian messianic hopes, while Mark and Luke

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<sup>15</sup> Matthew's conception, within the parameters of this specific question, is more developed because he alone associates Jesus with the end time and shifts the question's thrust toward Jesus and away from the temple.

only hint at it.

For source analysis, the introduction provides very little direction. The mention of the temple's destruction signifies a familiarity with the event but provides no indication of source or date of origin of the synoptic accounts. (Any one of the evangelists may be responsible for the question which is most probably dependent upon the events of 70 C.E.) Each author's perspective, in this section, fails to suggest specific synoptic relationships. Although Matthew's question displays a more sophisticated Christian conception of the parousia, one may not conclude a secondary position for the account. Conclusions pertaining to priority demand firmer evidence than can be drawn from this passage.

The next section to be considered relates the troubles that will befall the disciples as the end approaches, Mt 24:9-14/Mk 13:9-13/Lk 21:12-19. The accounts possess common material; pointing to some form of dependent relationship. The most striking parallel, however, is seen when Mark 13:9-12 is compared with Matthew 10:17-21 which lies outside the parameters of the apocalyptic discourse. Matthew's context of this parallel is the Sending Out of the Twelve where he discloses the fate of the disciples as they preach the gospel. Mark prefers a different setting for Jesus' words and associates them with the parousia. Matthew's context may be construed as evidence of a period of growth for Christianity which would not be consistent with Mark's conception of the parousia as about to occur. The Lucan parallel, 21:12-19, paraphrases Mark and Matthew's (24:9-14) emphasis, presenting

a more encouraging picture to the reader.

The Marcan and Matthean parallel suggests a close relationship between the two gospels. The Matthean context demonstrates a certain degree of literary sophistication. "Matthew's handling of his material, much fuller and more systematic, is careful to preserve the distinction between instruction given to the inner circle and that given to a wider audience."<sup>16</sup> He attempts to create a consistent topical arrangement which will complement the discourse's content. Mark's context is complicated because in addition to 13:9-13, the text demonstrates an affinity to 6:6-11, the Sending Out of the Twelve. Mark records the twelve's mission but also presses for an imminent end in the Synoptic Apocalypse. It appears that he has attempted to minimize speculation on a prolonged Church history by augmenting the importance of the approaching end. Along the same lines, it is possible that the idea of prolonged Church history had not yet emerged in Mark's time.

Elements of the Matthean Sending Out of the Twelve Discourse, appear in two Marcan contexts. The possibility arises that Matthew's composition may have been altered for Mark's purpose. The possibility also exists that Matthew has provided a more suitable context for the Marcan verses. Matthew's discourse, however, suggests an internal coherency, as discerned in the linear analysis, based upon more than the

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<sup>16</sup>W.F. Albright and C.S. Mann, The Anchor Bible: Matthew (New York: Doubleday & Co., Inc., 1971) p.124.

consolidating of Marcan material. Proponents of Matthean or Marcan priority must realize that the evidence remains meager. It seems certain that Luke is of a secondary character but upon whom he draws his information is not discernible. Matthew and Mark furnish plausible accounts which fail to betray their source within the synoptics.

The third section of our analysis, Mt 24:15/Mk 13:14/Lk 21:20, gives the evangelists' interpretation of a desolating sacrilege. Matthew alludes directly to the sacrilege mentioned in Daniel 11:31. The parenthetical comment in the text, however, exhorts the reader to a new interpretation, possibly the war or desecration of a holy place familiar to Matthew's readers. Mark also speaks of a desolating sacrilege but fails to mention the prophet Daniel and the holy place. The Marcan phrase, "set up where it ought not to be," may refer to Caligula's proposed plan or possibly "the equestrian statue of Hadrian placed on the old temple site, Aelia Capitolina, which was built on the ruins of Jerusalem."<sup>17</sup> Mark also refers to trouble in Judea but the dating of the trouble is problematic. Luke does not use the concept of desolation to his understanding of the fate of Jerusalem. For Luke, the city's destruction accompanies the parousia because of the Jewish rejection of Jesus.

This section appears to favor Matthean priority. <sup>Ma</sup> Matthew's allusion to Daniel is explicit and seems to be

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<sup>17</sup>Grant, p.855.

weakened in Mark while Luke totally reinterprets the original concept to demonstrate the rule of a gentile mission in Church history. A stronger possibility exists that Mark altered a direct allusion than Matthew created a direct allusion from a reference to one verse in Daniel. The possibility is strengthened when one considers that the total Matthean account, 24:15-22, is based upon the allusion and reveals a Jewish-Christian orientation.<sup>18</sup> Mark, 13:14-20, is also dependent upon the allusion but minimizes its Jewish character. Luke's account is of little use because his interpretation may have stemmed from either of the passages. Matthew may warrant priority but insufficient evidence exists for support of a particular source hypothesis.<sup>19</sup>

The ~~fourth~~ section deals with Mark's ending to the discourse, 13:33-37. The important lateral relationship concerns Mark's parable, 13:4, and the Matthean and Lucan parable of the talents or pounds (Mt 25:14-30/Lk 19:12-27). Matthew uses the parable as an exhortation to preparedness, complementing his previous chapter. Luke associates the parable with the teaching of Jesus in Jericho. For Luke, the parable "teaches that the second coming of Christ will be delayed; that Christians have specific duties in the interim; and that there will be a last judgement with rewards and

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<sup>18</sup>The Jewish Christian character becomes apparent with the reference to the Sabbath, 24:20.

<sup>19</sup>The Augustinian hypothesis may be plausible but it is at the best an extremely tentative solution at this point.

punishments."<sup>20</sup> Mark condenses the parable to one verse, 13:34, emphasizing one theme that has been made throughout the discourse, "be on the watch."<sup>21</sup>

The Matthean and Lucan accounts preserve a developed version of the parable in a comfortable context. Matthew uses the parable to complement his previous discourse. Luke uses it to refine his presentation of the delayed parousia. Mark on the other hand, emphasizes one point, be on the watch. The Marcan verse is a condensation and allusion to the parable but concentrates on the single point.<sup>22</sup> The concentration serves as a central focus and brings together the various verses of the section. The above evidence cannot support any particular source hypothesis. Matthew and Luke are more refined, but a less developed account is no indication of priority.

The lateral analysis has shown the complicated structure of the Synoptic Apocalyptic discourse. Unfortunately, the analysis has not provided any firm direction for source conclusion. The second and third lateral analyses hint at Matthean priority but the situation is tentative and does not provide any information for subsequent relationships.

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<sup>20</sup>Gilmour, p.328.

<sup>21</sup>Matthew and Mark both display an interest in being prepared that is not found, to the same degree, in Luke.

<sup>22</sup>Condensation is not meant to imply a ~~case~~ use of Matthew or Luke. Instead, Mark's account is a condensation in theme and content; it does not deal with the same amount of material.

Dependency within the Synoptic Apocalypse is apparent, but the redactional work of each evangelist has obscured the synoptic relationships.



## CHAPTER IV

## THE TRANSFIGURATION NARRATIVE

The Synoptic problem's multi-faceted and complex nature is obvious throughout the synoptic record. Within the confines of the triple tradition, however, this complexity becomes a major challenge in source analysis. The triple tradition creates a situation in which all possible synoptic relationships have the opportunity to surface. As a result, analysis must be dependent upon rigid linear readings in order to grasp the individual orientations of each evangelist. The Transfiguration narrative (Mt 17:1-8/Mk 9:2-8/Lk 9:28-36), perhaps one of the most complex episodes of the triple tradition, deserves attention due to its importance within the synoptic gospels.

Prior to a discussion of the linear readings, one must consider the general background and content of the story. The basic story line revolves around the transfiguration of Jesus, the appearance of Moses and Elijah with Jesus on the mountain, Peter's request to construct three booths, and the presence of a cloud from which a divine message is issued. Despite the obvious over simplification of the narrative, these are the essential motifs common to all three accounts. Bultmann suggests that the origin of the narrative

can be traced to a resurrection story that has been relocated earlier in the ministry of Jesus.<sup>1</sup> The validity of this suggestion may be challenged because it tends to minimize the similarities to the theophany in Exodus 24 and 34. As Cope points out, "The facts that the detail fits with several others in reference to a limited passage in the OT and that that passage is one of vital importance to first-century Judaism suggest that the story is consciously shaped in reference to the theophany at Sinai."<sup>2</sup> A linear reading of the gospels should demonstrate the evangelist's reliance on the Exodus theophany.

The Matthean Transfiguration narrative contains some additions to the basic Moses/Sinai allusion. Matthew's description of Jesus' transfiguration is supplemented with a phrase concerning Jesus' face, "and his face shone like the sun." This phrase strengthens the allusion to the Sinai theophany because it refers to the illumination of Moses' face after he conversed with God (Ex 34:29-35).<sup>3</sup> Matthew also adopts the chronological order of Moses and Elijah which fits his purpose of trying to present Jesus as the new Moses. The climax of the story is typically Matthean. The message from the cloud provides divine confirmation of Jesus as the 'New Moses' (Matthew probably intends that Jesus not only fulfills

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<sup>1</sup>R. Bultmann, p.259-60.

<sup>2</sup>O.L. Cope, p.100.

<sup>3</sup>S.E. Johnson, p.459. .

this role but also supercedes it) and the disciples react with appropriate awe in the face of the miraculous.

The Matthean episode presents the strongest allusion to the Exodus theophany in the synoptic record because of Matthew's orientation and emphasis. Cope states that the climatic incident of the story is the voice from the cloud, not the conversation with Moses and Elijah.<sup>4</sup> The climax, in other words reinforces the Old Testament allusion; the commission of Moses (Ex. 25:1) and Elijah (1Kgs 19:16) by God is paralleled by the commission of Jesus (17:5). The command's authority receives additional support when compared to the command present in Dt. 18:15, "...to him you shall listen." This set of circumstances binds Jesus to the Old Testament prophetic tradition and more specifically to that of the Mosaic tradition.

Davies has shown that Matthew uses the Transfiguration story to further support his interpretation of Jesus as the 'New Moses.'<sup>5</sup> This conception of Jesus, as an ethical teacher, enables Matthew to present the Transfiguration as a means to lead into the teaching discourse section (17:24-28:35).<sup>6</sup> Matthew's allusion of Jesus to Moses is developed but he also has a deeper understanding of Jesus as the 'New Moses.' For

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<sup>4</sup>Cope, p.100.

<sup>5</sup>W.D. Davies, The Setting of the Sermon on the Mount (Cambridge: The University Press, 1966), p.52.

<sup>6</sup>Matthew does not totally ignore the Passion motif altogether, although such a motif is almost non-existent in the account, but his main concern lies with the upcoming teaching discourse. (Davies, p.53; Cope, p.101).

Matthew, Jesus has surpassed the glory of Moses which is evidenced by the fact that Jesus remains by himself while Moses and Elijah have disappeared after the theophany. Matthew's placement of the disciple's awe, which follows immediately after the voice from the cloud, provides the final confirmation of Jesus as the 'New Moses.'

In addition to the common motifs already mentioned, the Marcan account develops some new emphasis. The description of Jesus' transfiguration contains no reference to Jesus' physical appearance except to comment specifically on his garments. In fact, the change in the garments is vividly described, they became "intensely white as no fuller on earth could bleach them." Another Marcan peculiarity is the ordering of Elijah and Moses in depicting the two Old Testament prophets' appearance. A chronological order would place Moses prior to Elijah but because of Mark's understanding of Jesus as the suffering Son of Man, the order is altered there by accentuating this conception of Jesus.<sup>7</sup> A third Marcan characteristic may be discerned in verse 9:6 which is almost an apologetic explanation for Peter's request to construct the three booths.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>7</sup>Mark's placement of Elijah points to an understanding of Jesus as the suffering Son of Man because the evangelist has disrupted the expected chronology of Moses-Elijah which demonstrates a deviation from the Jewish interpretation. The nature of Elijah's prophetic mission and his subsequent importance in messianic activity agrees with Mark's conception of Jesus much more than Moses.

<sup>8</sup>Although Luke contains a similar verse (9:33c), Mark's statement is much more forceful in explaining Peter's foolish request.

Such a statement would be congruous with Mark's understanding of the disciples as basically obtuse to Jesus message. Finally, the divine message issued from the cloud. "This is my beloved Son; listen to him," is Mark's attempt to show that Jesus' earlier words (8:38) now have heavenly confirmation.<sup>9</sup>

As stated before, the synoptic accounts of the Transfiguration allude to the Exodus Theophany. The following parallels demonstrate a relationship between the Old Testament story and the Marcan narrative.

1) Mk 9:2 The symbolic use of the phrase, "after six days."

2) The similarity with Ex. 24:16, the Lord orders Moses to build the Tabernacle and the three apostles are led to build three booths on the mountain (9:5).

3) Mk 9:7 The voice speaks from a cloud which parallels Ex. 24:16.

4) Mk 9:2 Peter, James, John, the rest of the disciples, and the crowd are analogous to Moses' companions Aaron, Nadab, and Abihu, the seventy elders, and the people as a whole.

5) Mk 9:4 The two men who appear with Jesus on the mountain are the only two men of the Old Testament to meet with God on Sinai. Moses in Ex. 24 and 34; Elijah in 1Kgs 19:9-3.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>9</sup>F.C. Grant, p.773.

<sup>10</sup>The I Kings passage is not directly related to the Exodus theophany but it further strengthens the bond between the Old Testament conception of theophany and Jesus' particular theophany, namely the whole transfiguration episode.

6) Mk 9:2-3 The radiance of Jesus is similar to that of Moses' radiance upon descending the mountain. Ex 34:29.<sup>11</sup>

These allusions serve as Mark's basis for developing the Transfiguration narrative but it is not Mark's intent to develop this basis into a major emphasis. Rather, Mark attempts to direct the reader's attention toward an understanding of Jesus as the Suffering Messiah. This particular emphasis strengthens the proclamation of the previous Baptism and looks toward the coming Passion and Resurrection.

This appears from the insistence on the Cross of the Son of Man (9:12); the priority given to Elijah, who is identified with the Baptist, whose death was a premonition of that of Jesus himself (9:12); the similarity between the Transfiguration and the Agony in Gethsemane, in that the witnesses of both are identical (9:2, 14:33); and the metamorphosis of Jesus in 9:2 which looks forward to the glory of the Resurrection (16:12) (cf. II Peter 1:16-18).<sup>12</sup>

Mark is indebted to the Sinai Moses allusion for it provides a framework in which to develop his understanding of Jesus but the framework does not control the thrust of the narrative. From Mark's perspective, the story is a part of the gospel's overall orientation, that Jesus is the Suffering Messiah, which culminates in Jesus' death and resurrection.

A linear reading of the Lucan account of the Transfiguration demonstrates Luke's alteration of the basic Sinai theophany motif. He begins the narrative with a temporal reference to eight days. This differs from the other synoptics and gives

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<sup>11</sup>A more extensive treatment of these parallels may be found in Davies, p.50.

<sup>12</sup>Davies, p.51.

an early indication of how Luke is moving away from the theophany model. The Lucan description of Jesus' transfiguration is interesting because he refrains from using the word (transfiguration) and utilizes the phrase, "the appearance of his countenance was altered." This seems to be a literary technique often employed by the evangelist. Luke makes special reference to the topic of conversation between Jesus, Moses, and Elijah which concerns Jesus' departure at Jerusalem. Such a reference points to a typical Lucan characteristic because the entire gospel is oriented to this city and the events that await Jesus. Finally, Luke's description of the cloud overshadowing the mountain is striking due to the imagery he creates of the cloud engulfing the mountain top. The author is not only changing the emphasis on the theophany basis but also demonstrating a degree of literary sophistication as he works with his sources.

Although Luke's narrative is based on the Exodus theophany, he does not, as has been shown, fully develop the allusion. Cope suggests that the story is a prefiguration of the ascension and exhaltation of Jesus and that "Luke uses the story of the transfiguration to point to Jesus' heavenly role and destiny and not emphasize the earthly mission."<sup>13</sup> This view, however, ignores the strong relationship that Luke develops toward the coming Passion. "The purpose behind

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<sup>13</sup>Cope, p.100.

the heavenly manifestation is the announcement of the Passion, and by this means the proof is given that the Passion is something decreed by God."<sup>14</sup> Luke understands the story as a divine confirmation of Jesus' earlier prediction concerning the Passion.<sup>15</sup>

The Transfiguration episode enables Luke to solidify his typological structure which, throughout the gospel, is leading toward Jerusalem. This typology is closely allied with Luke's interpretation of the Baptism and the Passion. "The one introduces the period of Jesus' Messianic awareness, the other the new period of Jesus' awareness of the Passion."<sup>16</sup> Luke uses the story to portray a shift in Jesus' mission; the beginning of the last phase of his earthly ministry. The new phase becomes confirmed by the topic of conversation among Jesus, Moses and Elijah, namely of Jesus' departure at Jerusalem.

A definite connection to the Passion, in the Lucan account, can be discerned through the following common motifs.

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<sup>14</sup>H. Congelmann, The Theology of St. Luke, translator, Geoffrey Buswell, (New York: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1960), p.57. Congelmann recognizes the difficulty involved in such a view. The Passion, in this context, is presented as something new to Jesus but Jesus has already spoken of the Passion himself. Congelmann attributes the difficulty to Luke's use of Mark and his connection of the scene to the Passion.

<sup>15</sup>The analysis is not meant to construct a rigid compartmentalization of Jesus mission. For Luke the ascension is as much a part of the Easter sequel as is the resurrection and, correspondingly, the passion derives its importance from the resurrection.

<sup>16</sup>Congelmann, p.58.



- 1) The prayer on the Mount of Transfiguration and the prayers by Jesus on the Mount of Olives (22:39).
- 2) The drowsiness (sleeping) of the disciples.
- 3) Both incidents are nocturnal
- 4) The heavenly apparition and the psychological explanation of the disciple's sleeping.<sup>17</sup>

Luke's use of the similarities between Passion and Transfiguration are important but he is not thinking of just one event, rather, he has a whole series of events in mind; the Passion, the Resurrection, and the Ascension which is the final culmination of Jesus' glory.<sup>18</sup>

The linear analysis of the synoptic accounts of the Transfiguration narrative has demonstrated that each evangelist understood and utilized the story in a particular manner. To be sure, the Moses/Sinai allusion is prevalent throughout the synoptic record but the importance of the allusion varies among the three accounts. Such a contention suggests that the story was originally shaped by the Sinai theophany and has been modified in the Gospels. This common basis, present with the different emphasis of the evangelists provides for

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<sup>17</sup>Conzelmann, p.58, develops a similar list. He also points to common motifs with the earlier Baptism which strengthens his view that Luke is consciously developing a coherent and consistent typology.

<sup>18</sup>Ibid., p.59, fn2. From this perspective, Cope's analysis is not wrong but rather too limited because it fails to account for the careful typology that Luke has constructed which forms a unified interpretation of Jesus total career, earthly and post-resurrectional.

subtle differences among Matthew, Mark, and Luke. A lateral analysis of these differences, may have some bearing upon synoptic relationships. The following section explores these differences.

1. The synoptic descriptions of Jesus' transfiguration (Mt 17:2/Mk 9:2c-3/Lk 9:29) possess some important variations. Mark makes a specific reference to Jesus' garments, "and his garments became glistening, intensely white, as no fuller on earth could bleach them," while making no remark concerning the physical appearance of Jesus, i.e., description of Jesus' face or body. Matthew, on the other hand, not only mentions the change in Jesus' garments but also comments on the change of Jesus' face, "and his face shone like the sun" (17:2). Davies presents the hypothesis that Matthew's phrase concerning Jesus' face recalls Exodus 34:29-35 which relates the shining of Moses' face after his meeting with God.<sup>19</sup> As a result, Matthew uses the conception of Moses as the Mediator of the Law in terms of Jesus, although Matthew understands that Jesus far exceeds the limitations of such a conception. Luke's account of Jesus' transfiguration makes special reference to the fact that Jesus was praying as his countenance was altered. As previously stated, Luke utilizes the prayer motif to connect the Transfiguration with the Baptism and the last prayers of Jesus on the Mount of Olives. The author's description of

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<sup>19</sup>Davies, p.52. Davies is careful to point out that such a recollection is not direct verbal allusion to Ex. 34:29 but rather a possible refinement or spiritualization of the reference.

- Sanday, W. "The Apocalyptic Element in the Gospels." The Hibbet Journal, 10(1911-1912).
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the event refrains from using the term transfigured and substitutes the phrase, "the appearance of his countenance was altered," which is indicative of Luke's literary style. It is interesting to note that Luke agrees with Matthew and Mark in mentioning the change in Jesus' clothes.

2. The ordering of Moses and Elijah's appearance (Mt 17:13/Mk 9:4/Lk 9:30) demonstrates an agreement of Matthew and Luke against Mark. Such a change in order may appear trivial but the sequence fits the emphasis of the evangelists. Matthew's placement of Moses first is chronologically correct and is consistent with his 'New Moses' motif. Mark's conception of Jesus as the Suffering Messiah enables him to give priority to Elijah who is the forerunner that foreshadows the fate of Jesus. Luke appears to have no real preference and may be following the chronological sequence or merely agreeing with his source.

3. The description of the cloud that overshadows the mountain is characterized by the use of the same verb in all three accounts (Mt 17:5/Mk 9:7/Lk 9:34). Matthew provides an alteration by adding the adjective, bright, which appears to be a bit unusual in the description of a cloud. Davies suggests that this description is reminiscent of the Shekinah, "that presence of the Lord which used to fill the tabernacle in the wilderness, and which was often connected with depths of light 'more intense than the midsummer sun.'"<sup>20</sup> Such a sug

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<sup>20</sup>Ibid.

suggestion explains the unusual description of the cloud and is supported by the reference to the booths in the narrative which possibly alludes to the Feast of Tabernacles. Again, it appears that Matthew is preserving the strong affinity of the Transfiguration to the Moses/Sinai allusion.

4. Peter's request to construct three booths for the divine figures points to a subtle variation within the synoptic accounts (Mt 17:4/Mk 9:5/Lk 9:33). The reference of the booths in the Transfiguration story probably stems from the Feast of Tabernacles. During this period, the feast may have been associated with the coming triumph of Israel as evidenced by the prophecies of Zechariah (14:16-19).<sup>21</sup> In the Matthean account it appears that Peter has misinterpreted the appearance of Moses and Elijah as the sign that the final age has arrived and that the Feast of Tabernacles will be celebrated.<sup>22</sup> Another possible explanation is that Peter understood that a new tabernacle now exists for the followers of Jesus. Mark also implies that Peter misunderstood the appearance. He makes an attempt to hide the misconception by stating that Peter made the request out of fear (9:6). Although Mark perceives the disciples as an obtuse lot, he does not want them to appear as fools which would stigmatize Jesus' mission. Luke, like Mark, adds an explanation to Peter's request. Luke, however, does not say the request was made out of fear but appears to add the explanation almost as an incidental phrase.

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<sup>21</sup>Johnson, p.460.

<sup>22</sup>Ibid.

5. The next lateral relationship concerns the placement of the disciple's fear within the story (Mt 17:6/Mk 9:6/Lk 9:34). As stated previously, Mark uses the disciples fear to explain Peter's request which tends to mitigate his misinterpretation of the appearance of Elijah and Moses. Matthew's placement of the disciple's awe serves to heighten the climax of the story. Awe is elicited from the disciples upon divine confirmation of Jesus as the 'New Moses' which is the point Matthew has been presenting throughout the narrative. It is important to note that Matthew utilizes the word awe, as opposed to fear, in order to connote a more positive understanding of the miraculous nature of the transfiguration and theophany. Luke perceives the disciple's fear as a response to the cloud which engulfs the mountain top. He seems to downplay their fear because he is more interested in relating the divine confirmation of the coming Passion. Although all three evangelists record some sort of fear or awe, in line with their particular interests, Matthew's treatment demonstrates a more sophisticated perception of the miraculous elements involved in the narrative.

The lateral analysis tries to provide a foundation in the development of a working hypothesis. In utilizing the analysis, our primary consideration concerns the use each evangelist would be making of his sources given the assumption of either Matthean or Marcan priority.<sup>23</sup> The nature of the Transfiguration

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<sup>23</sup>Lucan priority is a possibility but it would be extremely hard to substantiate especially in light of Luke's total gospel.

narrative, however, gives rise to serious questions about the validity of such an assumption. The analysis has highlighted synoptic differences but they do not pertain to synoptic relationships.<sup>24</sup> As a result, the evidence for supporting a particular source hypothesis is unavailable.

In an attempt to discern synoptic priority and dependency from the lateral relationships one must realize that the difficulties are immense. The discussion has accentuated the different emphasis of each gospel but has provided little material in terms of synoptic relationships. As Cope states;

The story is woven into its immediate and general context more clearly in Mark and Luke than in Matthew. On the other hand, the Moses/Sinai allusion is more extensive in Matthew and more appropriate to Matthew's use of the Mosaic theme.<sup>25</sup>

Any statement concerning synoptic relationships must be based upon more solid ground than the manner in which a particular evangelist understands his material.

Unfortunately, the synoptic accounts do not furnish such a basis. The lateral analysis has failed to uncover common material that will have a bearing on priority. In this case, the lateral analysis has increased our understanding of each evangelist's perspective but source conclusions must utilize a stronger basis than this.

Despite the meager amount of evidence that is available, some broad conclusions may be formulated in light of our study.

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<sup>24</sup> <sup>24</sup>As stated below, the lateral analysis provides the emphases of each evangelist which, in this case, do not aid the quest for priority and dependency.

<sup>25</sup>Cope, p.101.

It must be remembered that caution is desired so one does not develop conclusions that tax the limitations of the evidence. No single author can be identified as the originator of the Transfiguration narrative. Instead it appears that the story developed as a legitimation of the authority vested in Jesus' teaching by Christians."<sup>26</sup> The evangelists have taken up the narrative and tailored it to their own perspective. Matthew, by maintaining the Mosaic theme, appears to be closest to the tradition while Mark and Luke de-emphasized the theme in order to work the episode into the more general context of the gospels. Although Matthew appears to be nearest to the tradition, it in no way implies synoptic priority or the dependency of Mark and Luke on the account. The Transfiguration story demonstrates the literary skill of each evangelist but, as a result, the lines of dependency lie beyond the parameters of our analysis.



## CONCLUSION

The above analysis of the four selected pericopae demonstrates the complexity of the Synoptic Problem. Despite this complexity, the study has reached some important conclusions which should provide direction for further research.

The analysis may be divided into two parts. First the Empty Tomb Tradition and the Kingdom Parables Discourse present a strong case for Matthean priority. More specifically, the evidence suggests the Griesbach hypothesis as a possible explanation of synoptic relationships. The importance of this suggestion is that it offers a viable alternative to Marcan priority. Second, the Synoptic Apocalypse and the Transfiguration Narrative may not support any particular source hypothesis due to the inconclusive nature of the analysis. Such a conclusion has important ramifications for the Two-Document hypothesis. Within two specific contexts, the hypothesis' credibility has been seriously challenged and, as a result, demands a thorough re-examination. As a whole, the analysis of the four pericopae recommend a revision of the traditionally accepted conception of synoptic relationships, namely the Two-Document hypothesis.

The introduction proposed that one of the projects aims is to provide necessary information for the development of a working hypothesis. The Two-Document hypothesis can no longer

be considered the only possible solution. In fact, this study suggests that this hypothesis' problematic nature, as illustrated in the analysis, diminishes its probability as a viable solution. The study's preference for the Griesbach hypothesis does not imply that the Synoptic Problem has been solved.<sup>1</sup>

The use of the Griesbach hypothesis, as a working hypothesis, must be dependent upon a sensitivity to inherent limitations and new evidence. Such a proposal attempts to provide a solid ground for advanced gospel research while maintaining a degree of flexibility.

Finally, the project indicates two areas as significant for further research. First, an application of the Griesbach hypothesis to the entire synoptic gospels is necessary in order to provide needed evidence for the acceptance or rejection of the theory. A definitive statement concerning the validity of the theory depends upon such an application. Second, research on the synoptic problem must become interested in, to a greater degree, with the place of Luke within the synoptic relationships. The present evidence seems to suggest a secondary position for Luke but the Lucan text still remains vital in source analysis. Successful future research requires a constant sensitivity to and awareness of the multi-faceted dimensions of the total problem.

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<sup>1</sup>A complete investigation of the synoptic Parallels is necessary to substantiate such a claim.

## MATTHEW

## MARK

## LUKE

Description of Joseph of Arimathea 27:57

Description of Joseph of Arimathea 15:42-43a

Description of Joseph of Arimathea 23:50

Joseph asks Pilate for the body 27:58

Joseph asks Pilate for the body 15:43

Joseph asks Pilate for the body 23:52

Pilate gives Joseph the body 27:58

Pilate confirms the death of Jesus 15:44

Pilate gives Joseph the body 15:45

Burial takes place (complete) 27:59-61

Burial takes place (complete) 15:46

Burial takes place (incomplete, according to the actions of the women) 23:53-56

Tomb sealed with the stone 27:60

Tomb sealed with the stone 15:46

Comments on the size of the stone 27:60

Posting of the guard and the sealing of the tomb 27:62-66

Reason women go to the tomb "to see" 28:1

Reason women go to the tomb, to bring spices for the body 16:1

Reason women go to the tomb to bring spices for the body 24:1

Stone removed prior to the arrival of the women 16:4

Stone removed prior to the arrival of the women 24:2

Comments on the size of the stone 16:4

Earthquake, angel descends, stone is removed in the presence of the women and the guards 28:2-4

Women enter and see a young man 16:5

Women enter and see two young men 24:4

Message of the angel 28:5-7

Message of the young man 16:6-7

Suggestion that Jesus' earlier words are to be recalled 24:6

Reference to Peter 16:7 ←

Suggestion that Jesus' earlier words are to be recalled 16:7 ←

Message of the two young men 24:6-7

Women leave the tomb and say nothing due to fear 16:8

Women obey angel and leave to tell the disciples 28:8

Women remember and return to tell the apostles and others 24:8-9

Meeting with Jesus and confirmation of the angelic command 28:9-10

Names of the women are given; apostles do not believe 24:10-11

Road to Emmanus incident reference to Peter 24:13-35

The Bribing of the soldiers 28:11-15

Disciples evidently believe the women for they proceed to Galilee 28:16

Appearance of the Risen Jesus in Galilee 28:17

Appearance of the Risen Jesus in Jerusalem 24:36-39

The Command to Baptize; even in the Galilee 24:18-20

The Ascension of the Risen Jesus at Bethany 24:50-53

-----MT, MK, LK  
-----MT, LK

GREEN-----MT, MK  
BROWN-----MK, LK

## MATTHEW

## MARK

## LUKE

Jesus Relatives  
13:46-50

Jesus Relatives  
3:31-35

The Women Disciples  
8:1-5

Wheat and Tares Parable  
13:1-9

Sower Parable  
4:1-9

Sower Parable  
8:4-8

Parable Theory  
13:10-17

Parable Theory  
4:10-12

Parable Theory  
8:9-10

Saying of Possessor  
of Secrets  
13:12

Interpretation of  
Sower  
14:13-20

Interpretation of  
Sower  
8:11-15

Interpretation of  
Wheat and Tares  
13:18-23

Purpose of Parables  
4:21-25

Purpose of Parables  
8:16-18

Saying of Possessor  
of Secrets  
4:25

Saying of Possessor  
of Secrets  
8:18b

Parable of Seed  
Growing Secretly  
4:26-29

Wheat and Tares Parable  
13:24-30

Mustard Seed  
Parable  
13:31-32

Mustard Seed  
Parable  
4:30-32

Heaven Parable  
13:33

Jesus' Use of  
Parables  
13:34-35

Jesus' Use of  
Parables  
4:33-34

Interpretation of  
Wheat and Tares  
13:36-43

Hidden Treasure  
Parable  
13:44

Pearl Parable  
13:45-46



et Parable  
3:47-48

nterpretation of  
et Parable  
3:49-50

isciples and Parables  
3:51-52

82

Jesus True Relatives  
78:19-21

line indicates significant relationship.

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